

Banana Spider by Carol Hamilton

Last year we each had one,
then several, and I sent a few
to the neighbors' yard
by broom handling the huge webs
of ones who had taken up
inconvenient spots. We friends
compared notes by phone daily
on their doings, I showed off
my window one to dinner guests
and often visited the mother
of them all at her garden shrine
in the overgrown corner of the yard.

My arachnids were aware of me, too,
as they often scurried high
or dropped with a plunk to the ground
at an abrupt movement on my part.
But our daily encounters were counted on.
This year there has been nothing
to keep me admiring and wary each day.
No lemony yellows and glossy blacks,
the great intricate spans of web
with a ladder of white x's leading
up and down from the living bull's-eye.
The neighbor said he had seen
a small one....could there be such a thing?

I warn myself each day to look
before plunging into the heavy foliage,

or towards the water faucets,

but there has been nothing.
We ask ourselves what we did wrong.

We called each other, surprised, last year,
on the day all the webs and all the spiders
were just gone.

But it was autumn, and we hoped
on the new creation of spring.

Now we wonder many whys,
remember other such guests
of unaccountable habits.

We remember best
those that never return.

Carol Hamilton has recent publications in *Poet Lore*, *Tulane Review*, *Tar River Review*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Willow Review*, *U. S. Newsletter*, *Poetrybay*, *ellipsis* and others. She is a former Poet Laureate of Oklahoma. Recent books are *Lexicography* and *Master of Theater: Peter the Great*.